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A Report Upon Housing, West Palm Beach, Florida

Harland Bartholomew & Associates

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A Report Upon
HOUSING

WEST PALM BEACH, FLORIDA

Prepared for
CITY COMMISSION
and the
CITY PLANNING BOARD

By
HARLAND BARTHOLOMEW & ASSOCIATES
CITY PLANNERS
SAINT LOUIS, MISSOURI

A Preliminary Report Upon
HOUSING FACILITIES
WEST PALM BEACH, FLORIDA

Prepared for
THE CITY COMMISSION
and the
CITY PLANNING BOARD

By
HARLAND BARTHOLOMEW & ASSOCIATES
City Planners
Saint Louis, Missouri

September, 1952

HARLAND BARTHOLOMEW AND ASSOCIATES

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September, 1952

City Commission
City Planning Board
West Palm Beach, Florida

Gentlemen:

We are pleased to submit herewith our preliminary report upon Housing Facilities. This is another of a series of reports comprising your comprehensive city plan.

The accompanying report is concerned with an analysis of existing housing facilities within your city and the problems related thereto. It contains recommendations as to how these problems can most effectively be dealt with, particularly recommendations regarding the problem of clearing and rebuilding your areas containing the worst housing facilities.

During the preparation of this report, we have received the most helpful assistance from local officials, organizations and citizens. We particularly wish to acknowledge the assistance given by Mr. W. E. Poland, Jr., Director of the Local Housing Authority.

Respectfully submitted,

HARLAND BARTHOLOMEW & ASSOCIATES

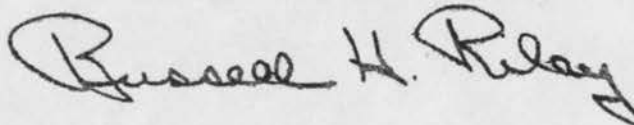
A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Russell H. Riley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, prominent "R" at the beginning.

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INTRODUCTION

The land use survey revealed that residential development occupied 1614.4 acres of land within the City of West Palm Beach. This is a far larger area than is occupied by any other private or public use and clearly indicates the importance of local housing facilities. Further, a larger area is occupied by local housing than in a normal city of similar size because of the large number of accommodations that must be provided for winter visitors. However, this only emphasizes the importance of maintaining housing facilities in a desirable condition.

The character of the housing facilities exert a major influence upon the welfare of the entire community. If the houses are not attractive and in good condition, they will not attract winter visitors. Further, the condition of the housing facility has an important influence upon the health and welfare of the citizens living therein. Another important characteristic of housing facilities is that they represent an important source of public income. While the amount of taxes paid by local home owners is reduced by homestead exemptions; nevertheless, if collective, amounts to important sums. Further the dwellings require substantial expenditures for public facilities and services, such as for streets, sewers, water, schools, parks, fire and police protection and garbage collection.

These large public expenditures makes it extremely necessary that the housing facilities be of good character and value so that the taxes received therefrom will compensate for much of the costs of such services.

Formerly, the provision of housing facilities was considered to be the complete responsibility of the individual and governments had no particular interest in the problem. Certainly this practice should still be adhered to insofar as possible. However, many of the new homes are now provided by large scale builders rather than for the individual to contract for the building of his own home. Thus, it is important that reasonable standards be enforced to insure the meeting of minimum requirements. There has also been a pronounced increase in the provision of housing by public agencies, particularly by Federal Agencies. The City of West Palm Beach has two public housing projects designed to accommodate low income families.

In 1949 a new housing act was adopted by the Federal Congress, not only for the continuation of the Public Housing Program, but also, for the provision of funds to assist local communities in acquiring and clearing slum and blighted areas and to make such areas available to private capital for redevelopment. This offers a completely new field for improving housing conditions, and the possibilities of utilizing this program should be carefully studied.

It is widely reocgnized that West Palm Beach does not have extensive slum areas partly because it is a comparatively new community and partly because substantial efforts have been made to maintain a desirable character in order to attract and accommodate winter visitors. However, there are a number of older homes not in good condition scattered throughout the city, and in addition, non-white residential sections contain many unsatisfactory housing facilities as will be discussed later. These areas will require special consideration; but like many cities of similar size, a major problem is that of insuring the erection of good quality homes and of maintaining and protecting the existing residential structures that are in a satisfactory condition.

The preceding sections of the city plan have proposed improvements, such as schools, parks and similar physical facilities that will improve residential sections throughout the city and encourage a desirable type of housing. This report contains recommendations regarding the protection and improvement of housing facilities throughout the city.

The report contains an analysis of existing housing facilities, detailed information regarding conditions in the worst slum areas and proposals and recommendations for the gradual improvement of bad housing as well as the protection of the housing now in a satisfactory condition.

PART I
EXISTING CONDITIONS

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The 1940 and 1950 U. S. Census included much data regarding housing facilities in both urban and rural areas. In cities of the population classification of West Palm Beach this data was summarized for the entire community rather than by blocks. Thus while it is not possible to show the exact location of local housing conditions and problems, the information does present a very complete picture of comparative conditions and of the extent of good and bad housing. Unfortunately, the 1950 housing data has not been made available other than the information regarding substandard housing. However, the 1940 Census indicates the dominant characteristic of housing conditions in West Palm Beach and somewhat similar conditions will undoubtedly be revealed in the 1950 Census.

Dominant Character of Housing

In 1940, there were 8,584 dwelling units in West Palm Beach (77 percent of the total dwelling units) that had been erected since 1920. Since the large majorities of these homes conform to satisfactory standards, they are not old enough to become seriously depreciated or in a bad structural condition. The desirable character of housing in West Palm Beach is further emphasized by the fact that only 1,278 homes, or 11 percent of the total,

then needed major repairs. Admittedly, nearly 1,300 homes are a substantial number to need repairing, but it is small in comparison with similar percentages in older and more northern cities. Likewise, only 269 of the total of 11,145 dwelling units had no running water. While the homes in West Palm Beach are now about 12 years older, there has also been a large amount of new residential construction, so that the proportion of old homes is not much greater than in 1940 and does not constitute a serious problem.

While the City of West Palm Beach has many fine residences, the majority of the living facilities are of a moderate but quite satisfactory character. With these, the major problem is one of protection so they will not become dilapidated or in an undesirable condition as well as of insuring that any new construction will conform to satisfactory standards. The major local housing problem is concerned with the older dilapidated homes that are classified as substandard, which are described in the following section.

Substandard Living Units

The Federal Public Housing Administration considers a dwelling unit to be substandard if it is either dilapidated or does not have a flush toilet and bath inside the structure for the occupants' exclusive use. The absence of hot running water is also considered to be a substandard

Table 1

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF SUBSTANDARD DWELLING UNITS
ACCORDING TO PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION
West Palm Beach - 1950

Characteristic	Total			White			Nonwhite		
	Total	Owner	Renter	Total	Owner	Renter	Total	Owner	Renter
Substandard Dwelling Units	100.0	30.4	69.6	25.4	11.7	13.6	74.6	18.7	56.0
Dilapidated	37.7	21.2	45.0	14.6	12.5	16.4	45.6	26.7	51.9
<u>Water Supply</u>									
Only cold piped running water inside	91.9	93.8	91.1	83.3	89.5	77.7	94.8	96.5	94.3
No piped running water inside	3.0	0.8	3.9	1.2	1.0	1.3	3.6	0.6	4.6
<u>Toilet Facilities</u>									
Flush toilet inside structure, shared	9.2	2.4	12.2	11.2	3.3	17.9	8.5	1.8	10.8
Other toilet facilities (including privy)	12.0	14.4	11.0	18.5	33.2	5.9	9.8	2.7	12.2
<u>Bathing Facilities</u>									
Installed bathtub or shower inside structure, shared	7.1	1.8	9.5	11.5	3.1	18.8	5.6	1.0	7.2
Other or none	35.6	25.3	40.1	20.0	34.2	7.9	40.9	3.8	47.9
<u>Condition and Plumbing Facilities</u>									
Not dilapidated with private flush toilets but no private bath	10.3	6.9	11.8	3.2	2.3	3.9	12.8	9.7	13.8
Dilapidated with private flush toilets but no private bath	12.4	4.5	15.8	0.1	0.3	-	16.5	7.2	19.6
Dilapidated with no running water inside	2.4	0.5	3.3	0.6	0.5	0.7	3.0	0.5	3.9

Data computed from a special publication of the 1950 Census of Housing

condition, although this is not of great importance in southern cities such as West Palm Beach.

According to a special tabulation of the 1950 Census, there were 3,349 substandard dwelling units in West Palm Beach in 1950. Of this amount, 171 were classed as substandard solely because of the absence of hot running water. While exact data is not now available, it is estimated that the city then contained about 15,500 dwelling units - thus about 21 percent were substandard. However, many of the substandard homes could be restored to satisfactory condition by nominal improvements.

The classification of substandard units was somewhat different in the 1940 Census, but a general comparison indicates that approximately 2,000 dwelling units were in a substandard condition in 1940. This reveals a rather substantial increase in substandard homes and in poor housing conditions within West Palm Beach during the past decade. It is in these areas that extensive measures will be necessary to improve these conditions.

Characteristics of Substandard Dwellings

Table 1 shows the physical characteristic of local substandard dwelling units according to the U. S. 1950 Census. As might be expected, a large portion, (69.6 percent) of the total units are renter rather than owner occupied. A total of 37.7 percent or approximately 1,239 units are in a dilapidated condition, and many of them

Table 2
 CONTRACT AND GROSS RENT OF RENTER-OCCUPIED
 SUBSTANDARD DWELLING UNITS

West Palm Beach - 1950

Monthly Rent	<u>Percentage of Distribution</u>		
	Total	White	Nonwhite
\$9 or less	6.0	7.2	5.7
\$10 to \$19	16.4	4.8	19.3
\$20 to \$29	36.6	19.5	40.7
\$30 to \$39	19.0	24.8	17.5
\$40 to \$49	13.1	24.5	10.3
\$50 or more	7.6	18.2	5.1
Not reported	1.4	1.1	1.5

Data computed from a special publication
 of the 1950 Census of Housing

should undoubtedly be removed at an early date. A very large portion of the substandard units contain no hot running water; but as previously indicated, this is not a major defect in the local area. It will be noted that a substantial proportion of the substandard dwelling facilities lack bath, toilet and bathing facilities; or at least, such facilities do not conform to minimum standards. There are more than 700 dwelling units without toilet facilities and more than 1,400 without bathing facilities conforming to minimum standards.

Table 1 also reveals that the large majority of the substandard dwelling units are occupied by non-white families. Nearly three-fourths of the total number, or approximately 2,500 substandard units are occupied by these families. The table also reveals that nearly one-half of the non-white substandard dwelling units are in a dilapidated condition. Further, the lack of satisfactory toilet and bathing facilities is more pronounced in the non-white substandard units. It will be noted, however, that comparatively few of the substandard dwelling units had no running water whatsoever.

Monthly Rentals Paid by Occupants of Substandard Dwellings

Table 2 shows the percentage of families paying monthly rentals according to different classifications in the existing 1950 substandard dwellings. Of particular interest is the fact that 65.7 percent of the non-white tenants

Table 3

1949 INCOME OF PRIMARY FAMILIES IN SUBSTANDARD DWELLING UNITS BY PERCENTAGES

West Palm Beach - 1950

Family Income	Total			White			Nonwhite		
	Total	Owner	Renter	Total	Owner	Renter	Total	Owner	Renter
\$ 999 or less	25.4	23.9	26.0	18.8	19.3	18.4	27.5	26.7	27.9
\$1,000 to \$1,499	14.4	11.4	15.8	9.0	7.4	10.6	16.2	13.8	17.0
\$1,500 to \$1,999	16.9	14.2	18.1	9.4	11.9	7.2	19.3	15.6	20.7
\$2,000 to \$2,499	17.9	17.7	18.1	11.3	11.9	10.2	20.2	21.1	19.7
\$2,500 to \$2,999	9.0	7.9	9.5	11.1	7.4	14.5	8.3	8.2	8.4
\$3,000 to \$4,999	11.4	18.2	8.2	26.0	27.3	25.1	6.6	12.8	4.3
\$5,000 or more	1.4	1.9	1.2	5.0	5.1	4.8	0.2	-	0.3
Not reported	3.6	4.8	3.1	9.4	9.7	9.2	1.7	1.8	1.7

Data computed from a special publication of the 1950 Census of Housing

paid less than \$30 a month. Only 31.5 percent of the white families paid a similar rent. Because of the inferior condition of many of the structures, it is probable that a higher rental is not warranted; yet the following table reveals that many of the families are not financially able to pay a higher rent. Obviously, this condition presents financial difficulties in providing dwelling units conforming to minimum standards that can be occupied by such families. However, a substantial portion of the white families living in the substandard dwellings - more than 42 percent - paid rentals of \$40 or more per month.

Income of Families in Substandard Dwelling Units

Table 3 shows the percentages of families occupying the substandard dwellings according to major classifications of family income. This data was compiled during the 1950 Census on a sampling basis and was then adjusted to the entire population. Approximately two-thirds of the non-white tenants living in local substandard dwellings had an income of less than \$2,000 a year. Of particular importance is the fact that 27.9 percent had an income of less than \$1,000. It is obvious that such families cannot pay a rent that would enable them to occupy dwellings conforming to minimum standards, which are owned and maintained by private capital. Consequently, some form of subsidy is essential if they are to utilize such facilities. This indicates a need for additional public housing facilities for the non-white families.

It should be noted, however, that about 23 percent of the non-white owners had incomes of \$2,500 or more and some 14 percent of the non-white tenants had a similar income. Consequently, these families can afford to rent satisfactory dwelling units whenever they are made available.

Location of Substandard Dwellings

As previously indicated, the U. S. Census data on housing for cities of West Palm Beach population does not summarize the data by blocks. Consequently, it is impracticable to show the detailed location of the substandard dwelling units. However, the location of such units are generally well known locally and are found in three major sections. These are: (1) Some are widely scattered throughout the city, particularly along the railroad and within or near the industrial district. Some of these are older homes that have been allowed to depreciate, while a few were of substandard construction in the first instance. (2) Another general location is within and near the central business district. Here the homes are older and many of them have been allowed to depreciate in anticipation that they would be absorbed by other uses.

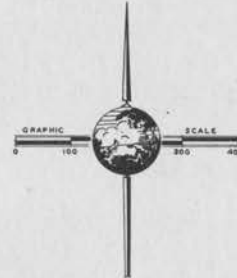
While there are several substandard dwellings in these two general locations, they are widely scattered, and comparatively few are found in any single block.

Consequently, it is not practicable to attempt a slum clearance and urban redevelopment program because of this scattering. The other structures are too valuable and useful to be considered in any slum clearance project. Many of these substandard dwellings will be removed as the area is used for commercial and industrial development, particularly since the land is becoming increasingly valuable. One method of facilitating this removal would be for the city to require units not conforming to desirable minimum standards to either be removed or rehabilitated. This possibility will be discussed later in this report.

The third major location of substandard dwellings is in the non-white residential sections lying northwest of the central business district. As is the case in most southern cities, the largest number of substandard dwellings are found in such residential areas. Further, this is the most logical location for any slum clearance and urban redevelopment program not only because of the large number of units but because they are more concentrated than in any other section of the city.

The local Housing Authority has long recognized that this district contained the major proportion of substandard dwellings; and, in 1951, the local authority engaged the Bureau of Business and Economic Research at the University of Miami to survey a portion of this area to determine the condition of the existing housing

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DWELLING UNIT RATING ACCORDING TO STATUS

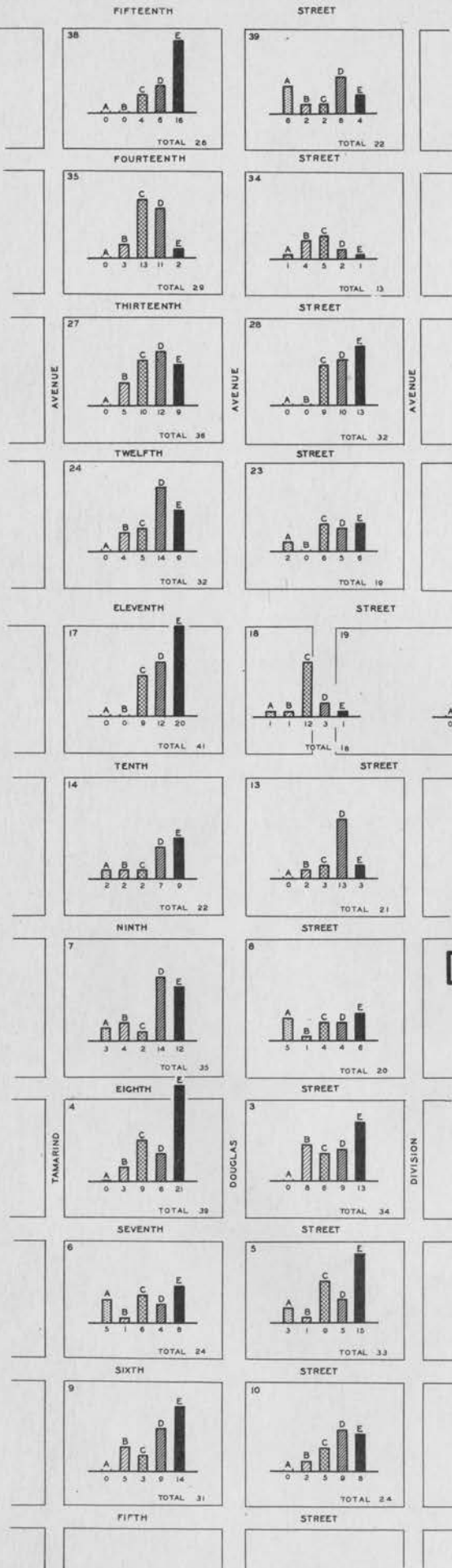
L E G E N D

- A - EXCELLENT STATUS
- B - IN NEED OF MINOR REPAIRS
- C - STRUCTURALLY SOUND BUT NEED REPAIRS
- D - DILAPIDATED & STRUCTURALLY UNSOUND
- E - UNSOUND - REMOVAL APPEARS NECESSARY



SCALE OF DWELLING UNITS
NUMBER UNDER COLUMN
REPRESENTS NUMBER OF UNITS.

NUMBER IN CORNER OF BLOCK
INDICATES BLOCK NUMBER



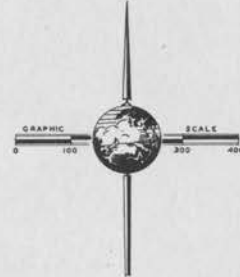
facilities. The area surveyed comprised some 20 blocks and extended between Fifth and Fifteenth Streets and included blocks on each side of Douglas Avenue. Some of the more important data compiled in this survey is graphically shown on the following plate.

Condition of Structures

Plate 1 graphically shows by the height of the bar the number of dwelling units in each block according to their structural condition. It will be readily apparent that a large proportion of the existing dwelling units are either in a very dilapidated condition or are structurally unsound and should be removed within the near future. In fact a few of the blocks have more than 50 percent of the total structures in these two conditions. The plate does reveal, however, that there is also a very substantial scattering of homes that are in an excellent condition or are only in need of minor repairs. In a few of the blocks as many as 20 percent or more of the homes are in this condition. This again indicates the difficulties of large-scale clearance; and instead, suggests the possibility of preparing plans whereby the homes in better condition could be retained. Those in need of minor repairs could be rehabilitated, and the homes in bad condition could be removed and replaced by new structures.

Although there is no clear pattern in the entire area, the majority of the blocks containing the most undesirable

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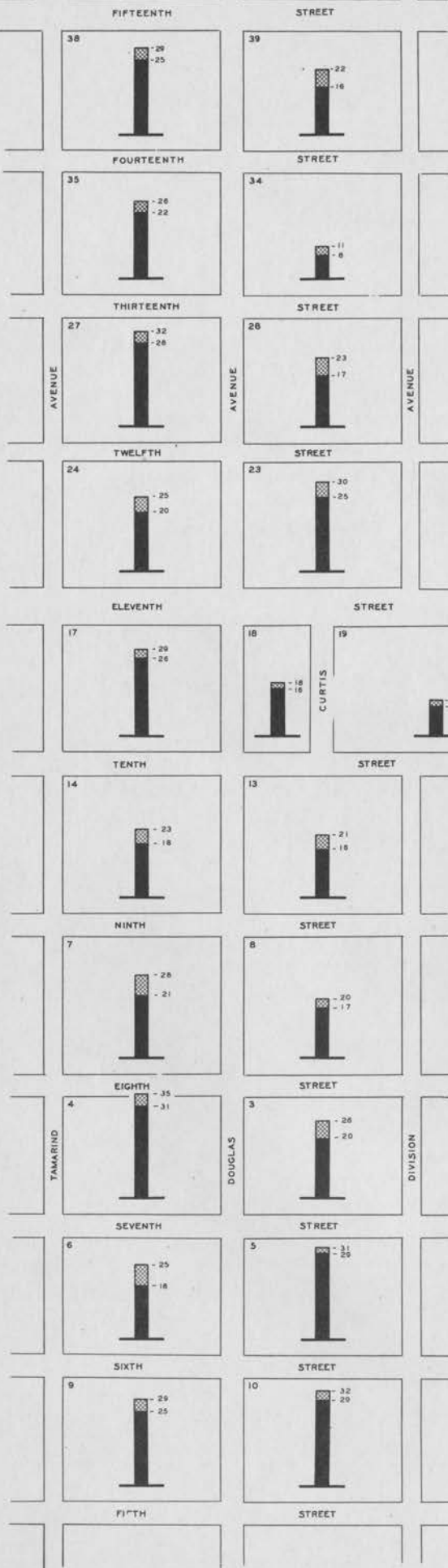
STRUCTURES PER LOT

L E G E N D

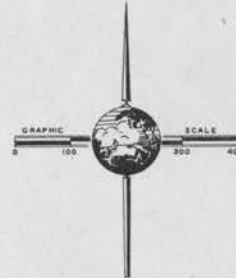
-  TOTAL NUMBER OF STRUCTURES
-  NUMBER OF STRUCTURES ON OVERCROWDED LOTS



NUMBER IN CORNER OF BLOCK
INDICATES BLOCK NUMBER



SECTION OF WEST PALM BEACH FLORIDA



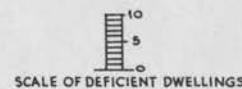
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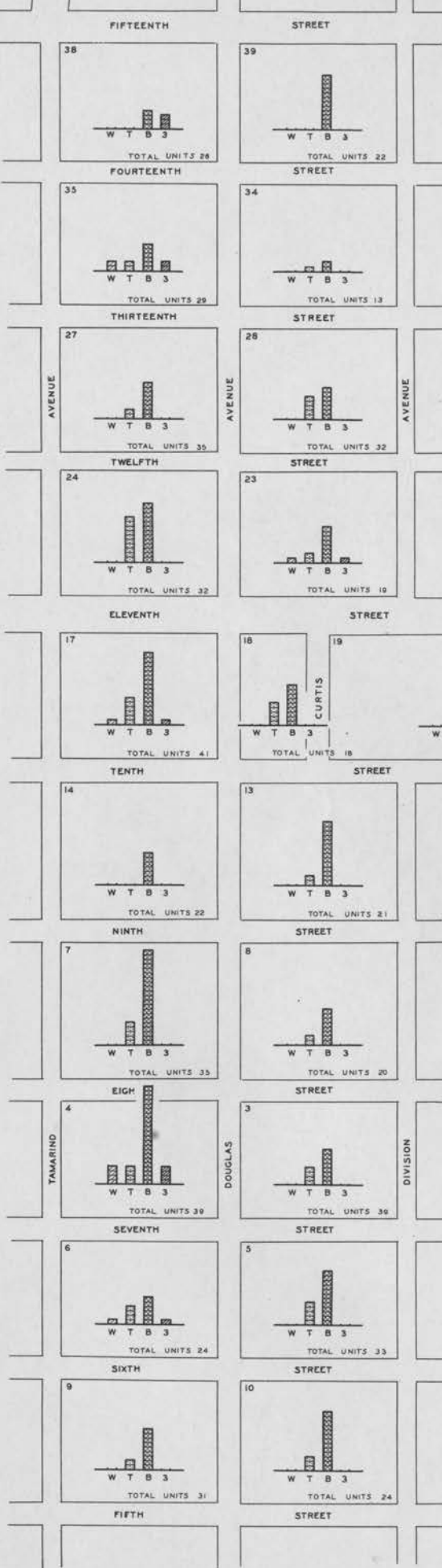
DEFICIENT FACILITIES

L E G E N D

- W - NUMBER OF DWELLING UNITS WITHOUT WATER
- T - NUMBER OF DWELLING UNITS WITHOUT TOILET
- B - NUMBER OF DWELLING UNITS WITHOUT BATH
- 3 - NUMBER OF DWELLING UNITS WITHOUT WATER, TOILET, OR BATH



NUMBER IN CORNER OF BLOCK
INDICATES BLOCK NUMBER



structures are located in the southern portion of the study area.

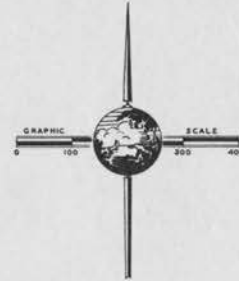
Structures Per Lot

The survey revealed that one of the major defects of the area studied was the crowding of dwelling units upon a single lot. This involves rear lot dwellings without proper access to the streets; and in many instances, there is inadequate light and air. While this is not uncommon in non-white residential sections, it is a major local problem because of inadequate areas to accommodate dwelling units that can be occupied by non-white families. Plate 2 reveals that every block studied contained some overcrowding and that the crowding was substantial in the large majority of the block. Again the plate reveals that the most serious overcrowding prevailed in the southern portion of the area. The removal of many of the substandard homes, particularly those in the rear, can probably best be occupied by urban redevelopment and is one of the major advantages that could be obtained from this program.

Absence of Standard Facilities

Plate 3 shows the number of dwelling units in each block that are either without water, toilet or bath or without any combination of these essential facilities. As implied by the table showing the condition of substandard units in the entire city, there are a substantial number of structures in each block that lack bath facilities.

SECTION OF WEST PALM BEACH FLORIDA

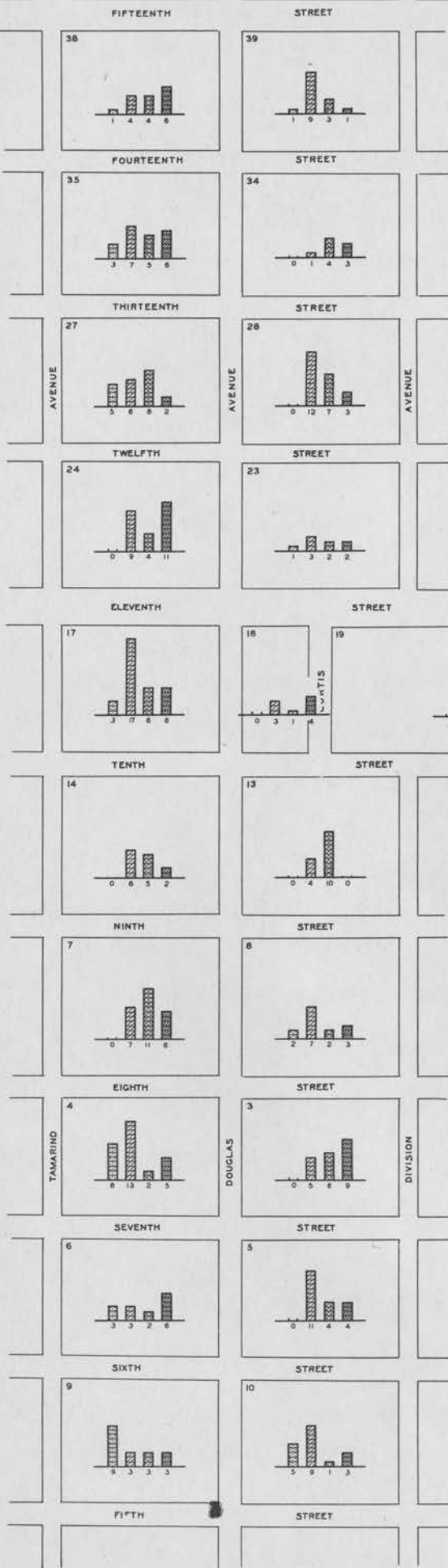
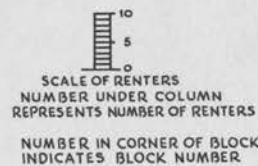
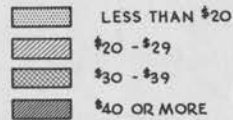


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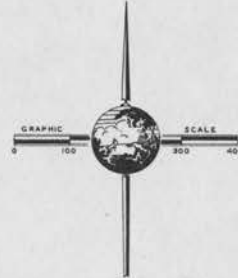
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MONTHLY RENTS

L E G E N D



SECTION OF WEST PALM BEACH FLORIDA

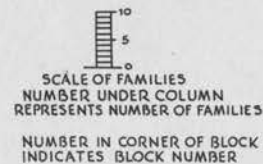
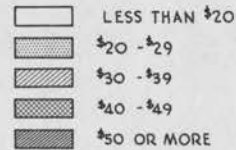


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WEEKLY FAMILY INCOME

L E G E N D



There are also a substantial number of dwelling units that are without indoor toilets. A large majority of the dwelling units surveyed do have running water and there are very few of them without any of the three essential facilities.

Monthly Rents

The survey also compiled data regarding monthly rents paid by the tenants. This data is graphically shown on Plate 4. The majority of the units rent for less than \$30 a month, although only a small proportion rent for less than \$20 a month. For the most part, the lower rentals are found in the southern portion of the project, which Plate 1 showed as containing the most dilapidated homes. It is surprising, however, to find that several of the units in some of the blocks rent for \$40 or more a month.

Weekly Family Income

Data was also compiled during the survey regarding the income of the families occupying the substandard dwelling units. Plate 5 reveals that several families in each block have an income of less than \$20 a week. Obviously such families cannot afford to rent good living facilities and, thus, occupy the substandard units. It is the families in this income classification that need financial assistance to live in dwellings conforming to minimum standards. Consequently, this is the group that the public housing program is primarily intended to serve.

A substantial portion of the families have an income of more than \$40 per week and several families have incomes of \$50 or more per week. This indicates that the income of many families is adequate to utilize dwelling units conforming to minimum standards, if some could be made available. The majority of these families undoubtedly occupy the better living facilities that are found in each block.

In summary, the preceding data reveals that while there are some scattered substandard homes scattered throughout the city, the majority are found within the nonwhite residential sections. West Palm Beach is not unusual in this respect, but it does indicate that there is a substantial problem of clearance and urban redevelopment. Further, the problem is complicated by the fact that the good and bad structures are so intermingled that large scale clearance is impracticable. The data also reveals that there is a substantial number of families with very low incomes that could very logically utilize public housing facilities. This is particularly true of the non-white families.

PART II

SUGGESTED HOUSING PROGRAM

SUGGESTED HOUSING PROGRAM

While housing facilities are of major importance to the health and economic welfare of all citizens, a good standard of housing is especially desirable in West Palm Beach because of the large number of winter visitors. Consequently, substantial efforts are warranted in improving housing facilities in the future and particularly in avoiding past mistakes.

Three major steps are necessary; namely, (1) regulatory measures that will protect good facilities and will insure good standards in the future, (2) regulations or activities that will improve scattered conditions that are either now bad or are becoming serious problems, and (3) clearance and rebuilding of a few areas where the majority of the substandard units are now located and which will probably never be corrected by individual action. Following is a brief discussion of the necessary steps under each of these three major classifications:

Regulatory Measures

Among the more important types of regulations that will protect good housing facilities in the future are the following:

Zoning

Zoning has proven to be one of the most effective means of protecting residential development and of insuring that

new residential units will conform to desirable standards. This is particularly true in avoiding congestion and in insuring adequate lawn and open spaces. It will also protect residential development against obnoxious encroachments. The Planning Board has been studying a revised zoning ordinance that will insure proper protection of existing residential development. The early adoption and consistent enforcement of this revised ordinance will be an important factor in protecting the good development and in insuring desirable standards in the future.

Subdivision Regulations

The development of a new subdivision is the first step in providing a living unit. If the subdivision conforms to modern standards of design and improvement, it will be an important factor in encouraging the construction and maintenance of dwelling units conforming to good standards. A proposed subdivision ordinance was contained in the Major Street portion of the Comprehensive City Plan and is now being studied by the Planning Board and City Commissioners. Such regulations could be particularly beneficial in that portion of the city that is still undeveloped and in guiding and assisting the development of the Westward Expansion Area. It is especially desirable that the subdivision regulations be enforced in all unincorporated area lying within three miles within the corporate limits of West Palm Beach. The cooperation of the County Commissioner should be secured in effecting this

regulation. It is in these more outlying sections that a desirable standard of design and improvements is seriously needed.

Building Code

The building code can be of particular importance in improving housing conditions by requiring that all new developments conform to modern minimum standards. It should also be adjusted so that it could require either the removal or the rehabilitation of unsafe or unsanitary structures. The code of the City of West Palm Beach implies such authority, but more complete explanation of the minimum standards that should be observed would be desirable. This will be discussed in the following section of this report. It is also very desirable that the building code be continually revised and adjusted to changing conditions and to modern standards and practices.

Rehabilitation or Improvement of Dilapidated Structures

There are a number of structures scattered throughout West Palm Beach that present an unattractive appearance and are in a rather dilapidated condition. Many of these are, however, structurally sound and could provide satisfactory living facilities if necessary improvements were made. It is primarily the responsibility of the individual owner to rehabilitate such structures, particularly when they are widely scattered. However, some assistance and encouragement can be given to such rehabilitation by civic

organization and by city officials. An important means of providing the necessary incentive is the creation of neighborhood associations who will take an active part in encouraging the rehabilitation of obsolete residences and the maintenance of homes in a satisfactory condition. In some instances public improvements such as schools, recreational areas and street improvements can be important factors in bringing about a better residential environment and a desire to maintain homes in better condition.

Where the homes are in very bad condition and are structurally unsound or unsafe for human habitation, the Inspector of Buildings should either require the facilities to be removed or to be improved so as to conform to minimum standards. As previously indicated, the Code of West Palm Beach implies such authority; but in order to provide an improved basis for this enforcement, it is recommended that certain minimum standards be included in the code which would more clearly define the basis for action by local officials. Among the more important minimum standards that could be included are the following:

- 1) All inhabitable rooms shall have a window or windows with the total glass area equal to at least 10 percent of their floor area opening onto a street, alley, court or easement open to the sky.

- 2) Each family dwelling unit shall contain an indoor toilet and a bathroom containing either a shower or tub.

Such facilities shall be for the exclusive use of the occupants of the dwelling units.

3) Each family unit shall be provided with a sink equipped with running water and a drain connected in accordance with local ordinances and standards. The floor below such sink must be maintained in good condition.

4) All doors and windows shall be provided with screening to assure proper protection against mosquitos, flies, rodents and insects.

5) All structural and physical parts of dwelling units shall be properly maintained and repaired.

6) All dwelling units shall be constructed and maintained so that water will not collect under the dwelling causing dampness of floor above it or permit the breeding of mosquitos.

Additional minimum standards may be desirable to insure a sound basis for enforcing such regulations against existing conditions. Whenever such regulations are adopted, it may also be desirable to create a board similar to the Board of Appeals in the Zoning Ordinance which could make minor variations and adjustments in unusual conditions.

Clearance and Redevelopment

Cities have long realized the importance of clearing and redeveloping the slum and blighted areas. However, no substantial progress has been made in the past, due primarily to the difficulties encountered in acquiring

land, in any sizeable portions, and in making it available at a price that would attract private developers to construct new housing or other uses within the economic range of the existing markets. Another disadvantage in redeveloping the slums has been the fact that unless a large enough area is acquired, any new development will probably soon be blighted and depreciated by the surrounding structures.

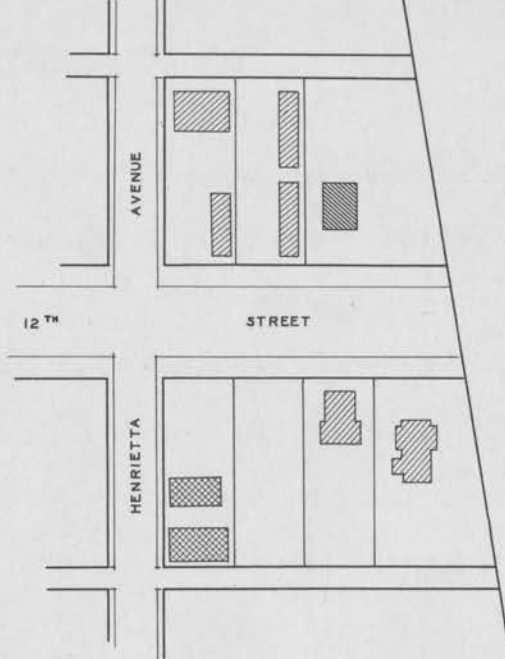
In 1949, the Federal Congress determined that the urban slums were of national interest and adopted legislation authorizing Federal assistance in clearing and rebuilding slum and blighted areas. With this important assistance many cities are now engaged in preparing studies and plans that will provide a new and real attack upon the slums.

The Federal financial assistance consists of loans and grants made to official local agencies authorized to handle the clearance and redevelopment program. The loans are for the preparation of studies and plans for the project as well as to acquire and clear the land. The grant is a specific financial contribution made by the Federal Agency to the local project. Under the terms of the legislation, such grant cannot exceed two-thirds of the total deficit incurred in planning, acquiring and clearing land in the project and the amount that can be realized from its sale for redevelopment. The city must absorb the remaining one-third of this deficit, but the city may include within




its portion the cost of any new physical improvements, such as streets, schools, and parks that will benefit the project when it is redeveloped.

The City of West Palm Beach has obtained an allocation of nearly \$200,000 of Federal funds for its redevelopment program. However, other than the survey made by the University of Miami, previously referred to, little or no progress has been made upon any redevelopment program.

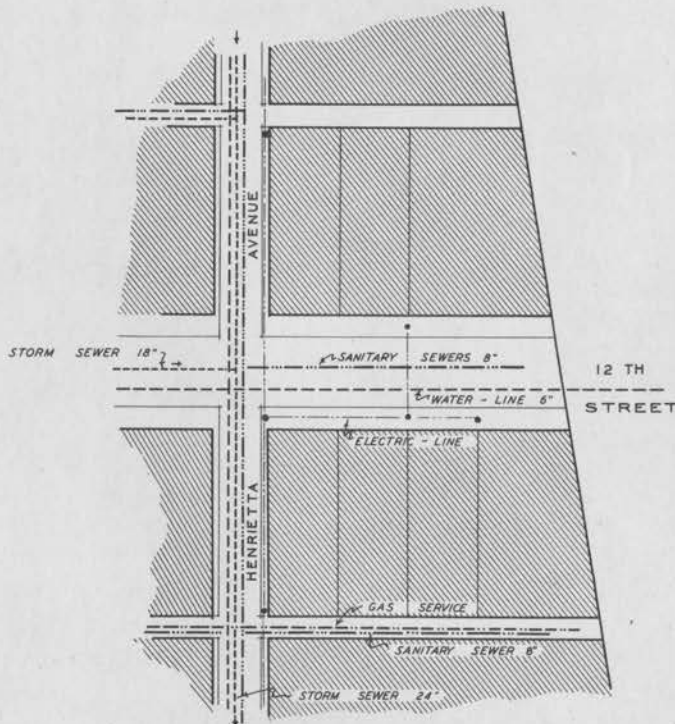
One of the major difficulties in initiating a local redevelopment program, which should logically be located in the nonwhite residential sections where such a large portion of the substandard dwellings are now found, is the difficulties that would be encountered in finding satisfactory living facilities for the families occupying the present dwelling units that would be removed. There is a very limited amount of vacant land where new nonwhite dwelling units can logically be developed as well as an almost complete absence of available units for such families. Consequently, the handling of displaced families creates a very serious problem. One possible solution would be the opening of the Westward Expansion Area where a considerable amount of land was planned to accommodate these families. Another would be the development of additional public housing units which would accommodate many of the displaced families because of their low income status. However, the location of a public housing project for nonwhite families presents a difficult problem unless the additional land is made available west of the Seaboard Railroad.



LEGEND:

-  SINGLE FAMILY
-  TWO OR MORE FAMILIES
-  SEMI - PUBLIC

LAND USE



LEGEND:

- WATER MAIN
- GAS LINE
- SANITARY SEWER
- STORM SEWER
- ELECTRIC LINE

UTILITIES

EXISTING DEVELOPMENT IN THE HENRIETTA 12TH STREET STUDY AREA (A) WEST PALM BEACH, FLORIDA

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CITY OF WEST PALM BEACH, FLORIDA

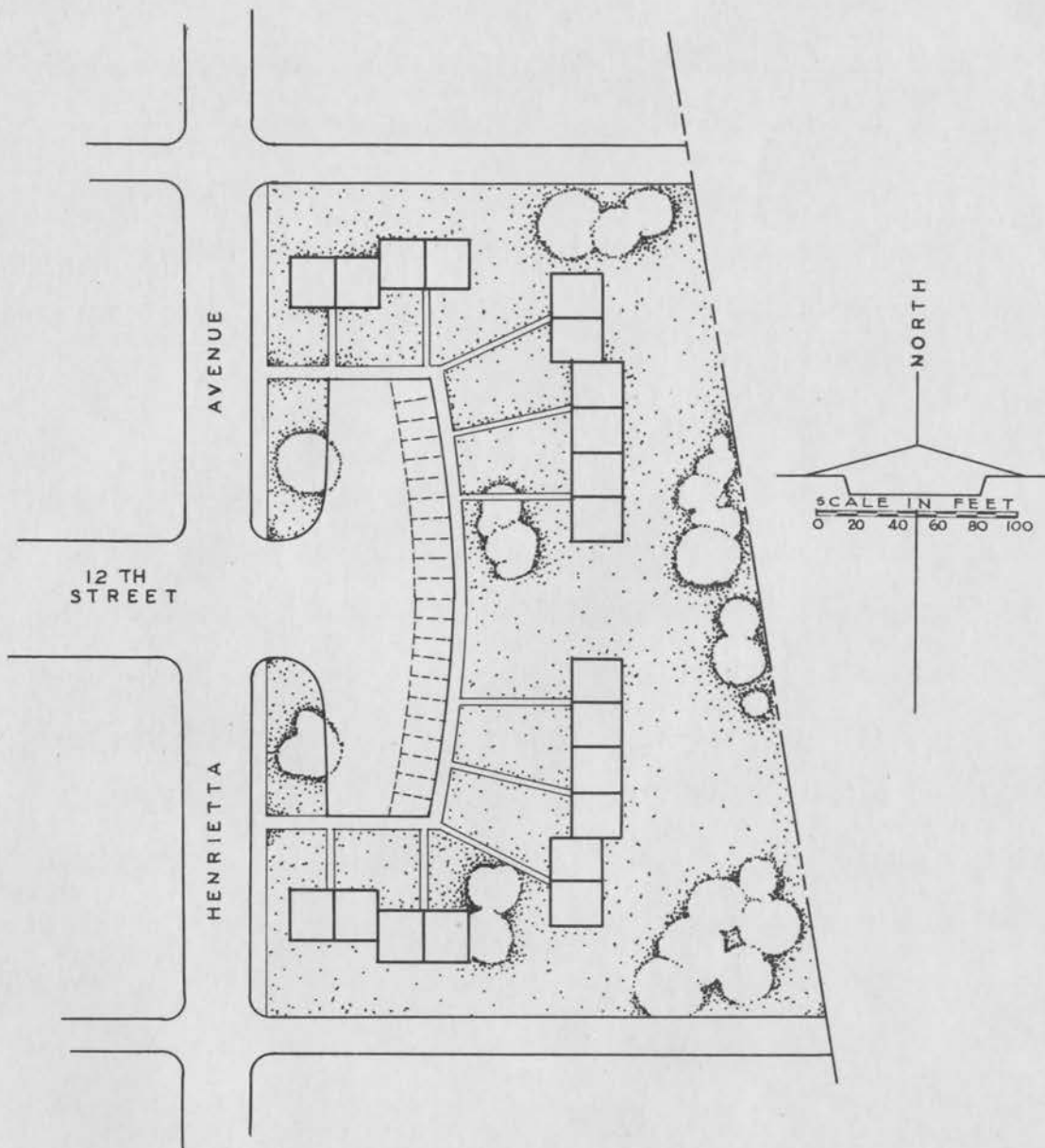
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Possible Approach to the Redevelopment Problem

Pending the time that additional public housing units can be made available and additional living units provided in the Westward Expansion Area for the nonwhite families, there is a possible method of initiating the local redevelopment program. This would involve the planning and redevelopment of small areas in scattered locations and in a progressive manner so that only a few families would be displaced at any one time. The newly erected dwelling units should exceed the number removed so that gradually many more living units would be available than are now found in the worst blighted areas. Thus the program could be gradually carried out over a long time with the final results being substantial; and yet, each individual phase would not in itself be spectacular.

Typical Areas. A study was made of two typical areas in the nonwhite residential section to determine how these smaller scale redevelopments might be effected. The accompanying Plate 6 shows the existing development and the location of sewers and other public utilities in the two half blocks on each side of 12th Street between Henrietta Avenue and the railroad. There are several old residential structures in this small area, none of which are in good condition, although possibly one or two of them might be moved to other locations. It should not be too difficult to find temporary living facilities for the families that are displaced. The area also contains a church which is



A POSSIBLE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR A TYPICAL SMALL AREA

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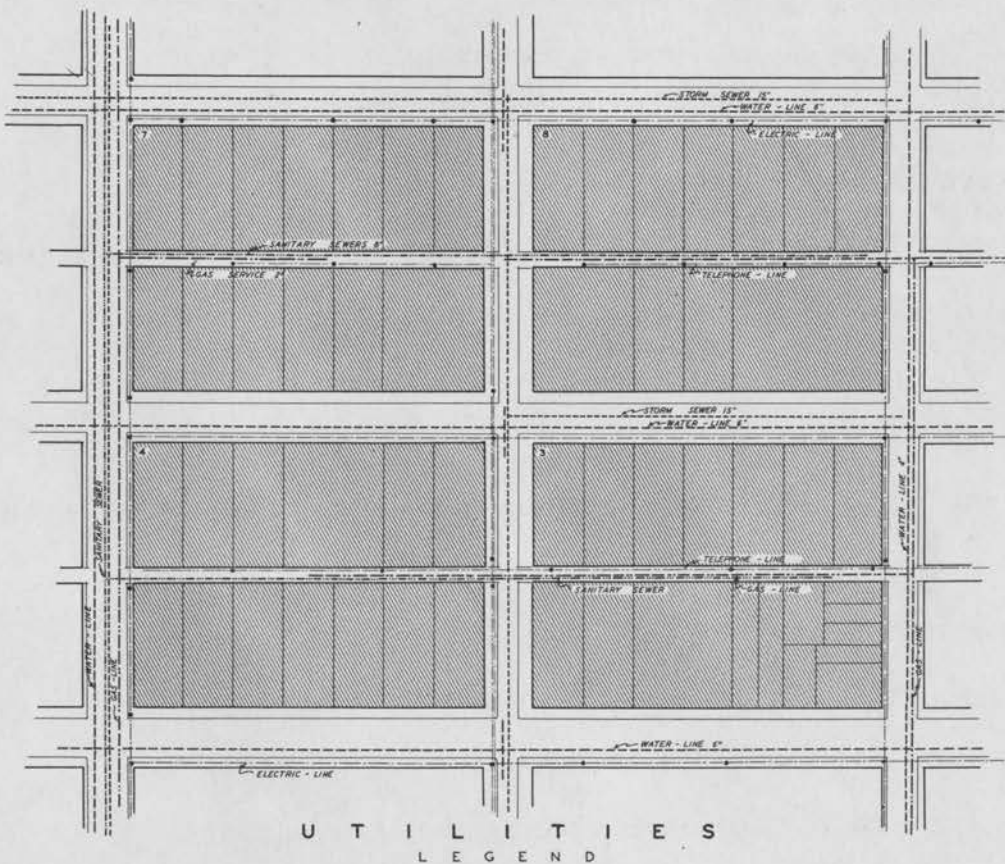
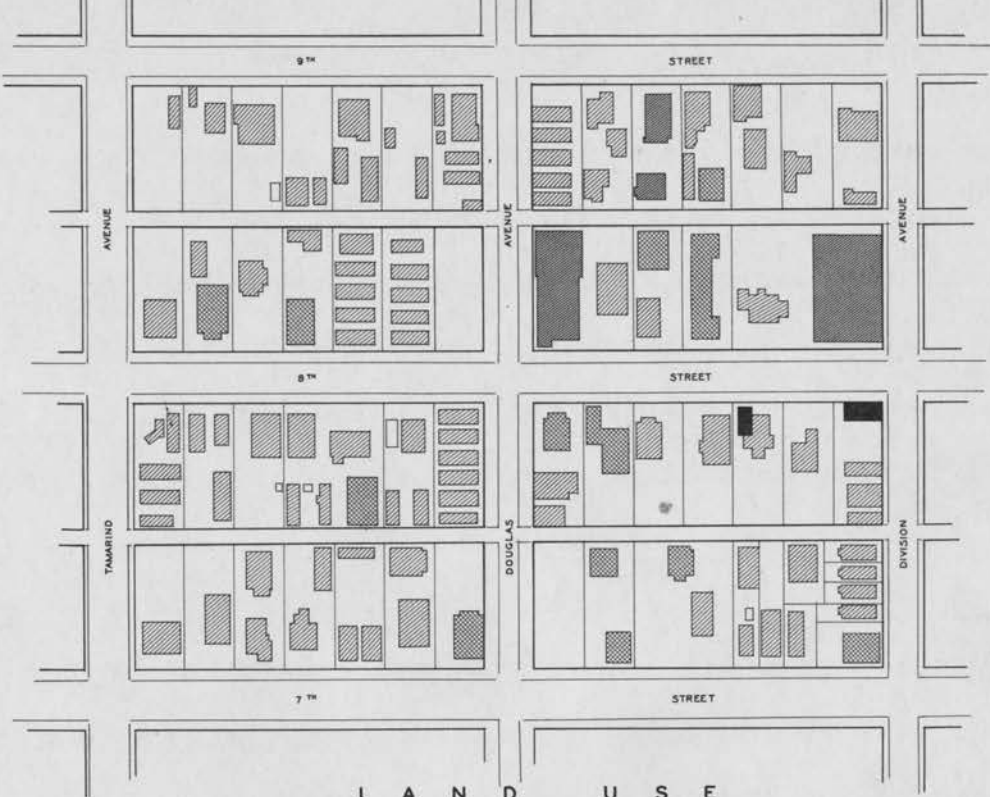
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in poor condition and could well be removed. The plate also shows that the area is completely served with sanitary and storm water sewers, water and all public utilities that would be necessary for a desirable, modern standard of dwelling facilities. With the availability of adequate public utilities, the site improvement cost for any redevelopment project could be quite low.

The accompanying Plate 7 shows a possible redevelopment of the two half blocks with modern housing facilities. The suggested type of dwelling units are two-story row houses. A major advantage of this type of unit is that each tenant could have a private yard for its individual use and maintenance. These yards provide adequate open space around each building, and there would be room for the drying of clothes and some play space for the children. Parking is provided in the court upon which the buildings face and no garages are proposed. It will be noted that a portion of 12th Street has been closed and only a small amount of additional paving will be needed.

The proposed development could accommodate a total of 20 living units, which is more than are now found within these two half blocks. Consequently, some seriously needed additional housing facilities would be provided under such a scheme. There is also room to enlarge the buildings so that two-story apartments could be constructed with complete living units upon each floor. Such buildings could accommodate 40 families, which would still conform to the density requirements of the zoning ordinance.



EXISTING DEVELOPMENT IN THE TAMARIND-DIVISION AREA BETWEEN 7TH & 9TH STREETS

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WEST PALM BEACH, FLORIDA

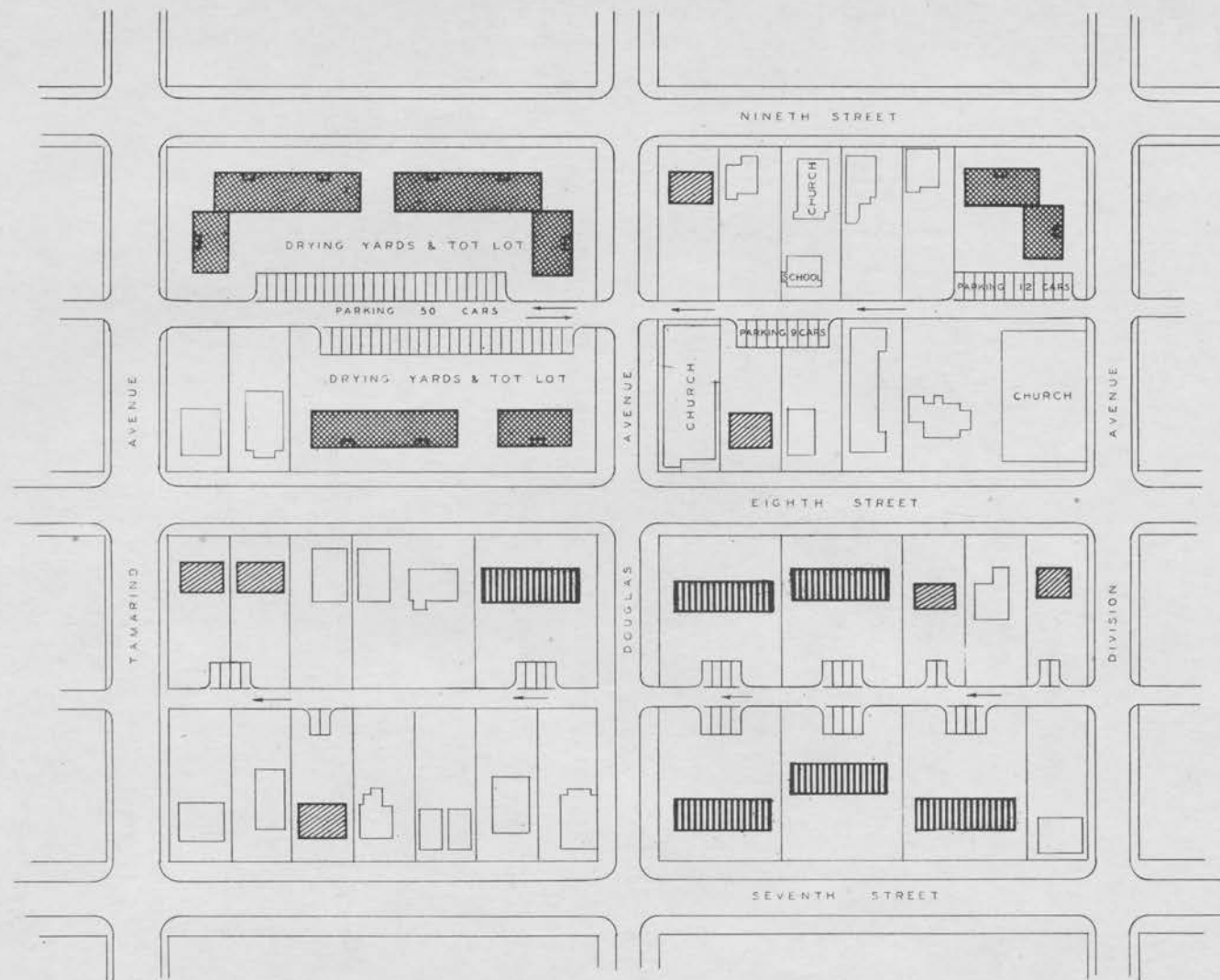
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individual use of the yards would be lost, however, and the open space would be greatly used by all tenants.

No estimates were made of the cost of the development; but because of the availability of public utilities, it should be possible to acquire and clear the land and to sell it at a very nominal price to a private developer. The major factors that will influence the resale price are (1) the fact that utilities are available, and (2) the Federal Government would absorb at least two-thirds of the difference between the cost of acquiring and clearing and the price at which the land was sold to the developer. In making the sale, the Housing Authority should impose such requirements and restrictions that would insure that the new structure would conform to desirable standards.

Another and larger area was also studied to determine the possibilities of redevelopment. This included the blocks lying between 7th and 9th Street and between Division and Tamarind Avenues. Preceding studies revealed that these four blocks contained some of the worst housing facilities in the area that was surveyed by the University of Miami. At the same time, it contains some good residence which should logically be retained.

The Plate 8 showing existing conditions reveals that very little vacant land is found within these four blocks. Further, there is a large amount of rear lot dwellings, which create over congestion and unsatisfactory living conditions. There are also a number of



POSSIBLE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN
FOR A TYPICAL AREA OF FOUR BLOCKS
WEST PALM BEACH, FLORIDA

CITY COMMISSION
CITY PLANNING BOARD
CITY OF WEST PALM BEACH, FLORIDA

L E G E N D

	APARTMENT
	ROWHOUSE
	DUPLEX
	EXISTING STRUCTURES TO BE RETAINED

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important public and semipublic structures, particularly churches, within these blocks, some of which will have to be retained. The cost of acquiring and demolishing them would be prohibitive; and further, they are an important portion of the community life and activities.

The lower portion of Plate 3 indicates the location and general extent of public utilities. This area is also well served with sanitary and storm water sewers, water, and with gas and electric. There is no indication that these will not be entirely adequate for the new development, although some limited street surfacing may be desirable. The availability of these existing sewer and water facilities will again assist in lowering the site improvement cost so that the area should be made available to a private developer at a normal price.

The accompanying Plate 9 shows a possible redevelopment of this four block area. It should be noted that the plan for the Westward Expansion Area proposed the development of a new parkway between 7th and 8 th Streets as the main approach to the new area; and thus, the two lower blocks may not be available for redevelopment with dwelling units. However, the plan proposed on Plate 9 is more of an exploratory type to indicate possibilities of the area, rather than to be a fixed pattern for this particular section of the city. Another major purpose in preparing a study of this particular area was to indicate

how some of the existing structures such as churches as well as residences, which are in good condition, could be maintained and new facilities related thereto.

The plate reveals that a very satisfactory development could be obtained in this section of the city after the worst houses were removed. The new units consist of duplexes, row houses, and three-story apartments. The plan provides ample open spaces between buildings which would permit opportunities for drying yards and some play space. Ample off-street parking space is provided along the alleys. A total of 104 living units are provided in the suggested units which is substantially more than would be removed. Thus, the redevelopment would result in a substantial increase in the number of available living units. Further, 19 existing dwelling units are retained as well as three churches. A few of the retained dwellings should have minor repairs so that they would be more in keeping with the new structures. It should be noted that it would be entirely possible to develop a block at a time rather than to clear and redevelop the entire four blocks in a single operation.

It is realized that the development of small sections in a piece meal manner does not permit the securing of the most modern type of design in the housing development or of a modern arrangement of streets. However, in the local instance, it is now the most feasible method of approaching this problem; and if gradually carried out

over a long period, substantial accomplishments could be made. It is also probable that nearby existing residences, which are not in good condition, would gradually be rehabilitated and improved to a better standard; and thus, this entire section of the city would be substantially benefited. As previously indicated, there is little possibility of large-scale redevelopment in this section until the Westward Expansion Area is made available and many additional living units are constructed for the nonwhite population. It should also be noted that, if a large number of additional nonwhite dwelling facilities could be made available, some portions of the larger area, now containing many substandard dwellings, could logically be improved with both commercial and industrial use. In fact, the proposed zoning ordinance provides for such uses in certain parts of the property.

In summary, while there is a problem of protecting the good housing by zoning, subdivision regulations and building codes and to gradually eliminate the scattered substandard and obsolete structures by the strict enforcement of minimum standards, the problem of providing additional dwelling units for nonwhite families is of particular importance. The latter program should include some additional public housing facilities as well as urban redevelopment projects. The opportunities of urban redevelopment should be carefully considered, particularly since the city has

funds ear marked for such use and other cities are making substantial accomplishments in this new undertaking. Even if it is necessary to do redevelopment in a piece meal manner, an early start should be made upon the preliminary studies, and projects should be developed that could be initiated from time to time.

